

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3854

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USNATO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

USDEL MC BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL TANGIER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 02849

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, SP, GI, NATO

SUBJECT: GIBRALTAR: GOS PRESENTATION AT THE MARCH 9-10

HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR ON SPAIN AND NATO

REF: MADRID 333 (DTG 121205Z JAN 78) (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTRY USED THE OCCASION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR ON SPAIN AND NATO (AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WHICH DID NOT PURPORT TO COMMIT GOVERNMENTS) TO SUGGEST IN A PREPARED STATEMENT THAT REAL VISIBLE PROGRESS ON THE GIBRALTAR QUESTION WOULD LIKELY BE A PRECONDITION FOR THE GOS' INITIATING A PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE IN SPAIN ON ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP. AT THE SAME TIME, GOS WILLINGNESS TO
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GUARANTEE UNINTERRUPTED AND FULL USE OF THE MILITARY FACILITIES IN GIBRALTAR BY THE WEST WAS UNDERLINED. THE SUGGESTION WAS AGAIN MADE THAT, WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF U.S. IMPARTIALITY ON THIS MATTER WHICH INVOLVES TWO FRIENDS, THE U.S. MIGHT FIND IT APPROPRIATE TO OFFER "FRIENDLY ADVICE AND ENCOURAGEMENT" TO THE BRITISH SO THAT THEY WOULD TACKLE THE PROBLEM SERIOUSLY. U.S. REPS

TOOK NOTE AND UNDERTOOK ONLY TO REPORT SPANISH COMMENTS IN DETAIL. (UK AND SPANISH REPRESENTATIVES WILL RESUME DISCUSSIONS ON GIBRALTAR IN PARIS ON MARCH 15.) END SUMMARY.

2. THE QUESTION OF GIBRALTAR WAS PLACED ON THE AGENDA OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR AT SPANISH REQUEST, WITH THE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THAT NO RESPONSE WAS EXPECTED FROM THE U.S. SIDE. THE PRESENTATION BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY' DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS (ELIAS) REVIEWED THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SPANISH AND BRITISH POSITIONS, POINTING UP THE COMPLEXITY OF AN ISSUE WHICH INVOLVES SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF STATES, DECOLONIZATION AND THE PRESENCE OF A MILITARY BASE ON SPANISH TERRITORY UNDER THE EXCLUSIVE CONTROL OF A FOREIGN POWER. HE WAS, HOWEVER, ENCOURAGED THAT, AFTER YEARS OF DEADLOCK, MATTERS WERE NOW MOVING AHEAD COINCIDENT WITH CHANGES IN THE SPANISH POLITICAL SITUATION AND IN PUBLIC OPINION IN BOTH COUNTRIES. SOME RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF GIBRALTAR WAS NOT INCONSISTENT, HE SAID, WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. HE EXPECTED THAT THE SPANISH CONSTITUTION, WHEN COMPLETED, WOULD PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR AUTONOMOUS REGIMES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL UNITY WHICH SHOULD HELP BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE UK AND SPANISH POSITIONS.
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3. THE UK HAD SAID BOTH IN TALKS WITH THE SPANISH AND ONCE PUBLICLY IN THE UN THAT IT WAS NOT AGAINST NEGOTIATING THE POSSIBLE RETURN OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER GIBRALTAR TO SPAIN PROVIDED THIS WAS NOT COUNTER TO THE WISHES OF THE INHABITANTS OF GIBRALTAR. THIS GAVE THE RESIDENTS OF GIBRALTAR NEW POSSIBILITIES; IN FACT, THEIR HELP WAS NOW NEEDED TO RESOLVE THIS COMPLEX PROBLEM. SPAIN THEREFORE WELCOMED THEIR PARTICIPATION AS PART OF THE UK DELEGATION IN THE CURRENT SERIES OF TALKS.

4. WITH RESPECT TO NATO MEMBERSHIP, ELIAS SAID ONE COULD ARGUE EITHER THAT THIS WOULD FACILITATE OR MAKE HARDER SOLUTION OF THE GIBRALTAR PROBLEM. CLEARLY NATO PROVIDED A FRAMEWORK TO HELP SOLVE DISPUTES AMONG ITS MEMBERS, AND IT COULD BE ASSUMED FROM THIS THAT ONE COULD BECOME A MEMBER BEFORE RESOLVING SUCH A PROBLEM. HOWEVER, THIS SEEMED A DUBIOUS ASSUMPTION IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE SINCE SPANISH PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY OPINION WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHY SPAIN SHOULD JOIN NATO IN A MANNER WHICH MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS TACIT ACCEPTANCE OF THE STATUS QUO.

5. THE BETTER CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER WOULD BE TO RESOLVE
THE PROBLEM, OR AT LEAST OBTAIN REAL AND VISIBLE PROGRESS
AS A CONDITION FOR HOLDING A PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATE IN SPAIN ON THE NATO MEMBERSHIP QUESTION.
6. ELIAS SAID IT WAS FULLY REALIZED BY THE GOS THAT
THE U.S. CONSIDERED THIS A BILATERAL PROBLEM INVOLVING

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MADRID 02849

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT NORRECTED)

TWO FRIENDS, ONE IN WHICH THE U.S. WOULD NOT WISH TO
BECOME INVOLVED. THIS, HE SAID, SEEMED REASONABLE BUT
MISSED THE REAL POINT, WHICH WAS THAT SPAIN WAS NOT
ASKING THE U.S. TO ADOPT A PUBLIC POSITION BUT DID CON-
SIDER IT POSSIBLE FOR THE U.S. TO GIVE "FRIENDLY ADVICE
AND ENCOURAGEMENT" SO THAT HMG WOULD MAKE A REAL EFFORT
TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM. THIS SEEMED FEASIBLE TO THE GOS
PARTICULARLY SINCE THE UK NOW SEEMED INTERESTED IN
SEEKING A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION, WHILE THE GOS WAS PRE-
PARED TO REINTEGRATE GIBRALTAR INTO SPAIN ON THE BASIS
OF A SPECIAL AUTONOMY STATUTE.

7. ELIAS CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT THE GOS WAS PER-
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PECTLY AWARE OF THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF THE MILITARY BASE
IN GIBRALTAR AND, WHETHER OR NOT SPAIN JOINED NATO, WAS
WILLING TO WORK OUT A FORMULA FOR ITS USE EITHER BY
NATO OR THE UK, VIA SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS, AFTER SPANISH
SOVEREIGNTY HAD BEEN REESTABLISHED. (SUBSEQUENTLY,
ON THE MARGIN OF THE MEETING, ELIAS' DEPUTY, DEL PINO,
UNDERLINED THIS POINT, SAYING THAT SPAIN WAS PREPARED,
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UK, TO OFFER UNINTERRUPTED
AND FULL USE OF THE BASE BY THE WEST. THE GOS WAS
PREPARED TO STATE THIS MORE FORMALLY SHOULD HMG RAISE
THE QUESTION IN THEIR FURTHER TALKS. WE ARE TOLD
BY THE BRITISH EMBASSY HERE THAT THE SPANISH HAVE
ALREADY IN FACT MADE THE GENERAL POINT ABOUT THE
CONTINUED USE OF GIBRALTAR TOTHEMIN THEIR TALKS.)

8. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY GOODBY, RESPONDING FOR
THE U.S. SIDE, TOOK NOTE OF THE ELIAS STATEMENT AND
UNDERTOOK TO REPORT IT IN DETAIL.

9. THIS TELEGRAM WAS PREPARED SUBVSEQUENT TO THE
DEPARTURE OF WASHINGTON PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR.
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